

Haven on Privit Drive

by DeBrabant

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Summary: Harry finds some unexpected friends at his aunt and uncle's block...

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>by GryffDeBrabant aka Danii the Jester

>The four women sat around the large dining room table at 4 Privet Drive. They were all drinking tea and eating some of Mrs. Dursley's apple tarts as they listened to Mrs. Dursley gushing about her son, Dudley, just like she did at every get together. Although the other 3 were quite bored, and were bored at every gathering Petunia Dursley attended, none mentioned this to her; it simply wasn't proper.

>However, just as Mrs. Dursley was about to start her story about Dudley's first steps for the third time, Mrs. Albertson, one of the most respected women in the community, spoke up.

>"Petunia, dear, what of that other boy I see around your house all the time, the dark haired one?"

>Petunia Dursley's face became quite white, but she recovered beautifully with a flustered laugh. "Oh, that's just m-my distant relative, yes, distant relative. His parents died in a car crash years ago".

>"What's his name, dear?" Mrs. Albertson prodded. Anything to get off Dudley, she thought.

>"Harry!", answered Mrs. Dursley quickly.

>Mrs. Albertson sighed to herself, then muttered "Hm, Harry Dursley..."

>"No, No, No!" Mrs. Dursley said quickly, aghast that anyone would think her nephew shared the proud Dursley name, "Harry POTTER!"

>Mrs. Albertson's eyes widened as a gasp escaped her throat, but no one seemed to notice it.

>"And what a trouble he is!" Mrs. Dursley continued, her voice demanding sympathy from all, "A runty, hateful child! Never as good a my little Duddy Wuddy Kins!"

>Mrs. Albertson knew that Mrs. Dursley was going to start up on

Dudley again and quickly started again.

>"I'd like to meet this 'Harry Potter', said Mrs. Albertson, her voice filled with steely righteous indignation, "I've met his like before, and know how to deal with them. I'll teach him a thing or two. In fact, how about you send him over tomorrow?"
Mrs. Dursley smiled wanly and nodded. "Of course, Helen, I'll send him over first thing in the morning."

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>"Get Up! Now!" Aunt Petunia screeched, knocking on Harry's bedroom door. A small groan could be heard, as well as the angry flapping of owl wings. Harry's owl, Hedwig, liked getting up about as much as Harry, which is not much at all. Knowing he had better do what he'd been told, Harry pulled himself up from his bed and shook his head a bit.
The sun shone through the thin drapes, shining off his jet black hair and glasses. His green eyes opened sleepily to the new day, hoping he'd see a thick castle wall, and not Dudley's old broken toys which populated Harry's room. Harry wished desperately that he was back at Hogwarts. Hogwarts, which is the finest school for witchcraft and wizardry, was Harry's school, for you see Harry was a wizard. In fact, Harry was a famous wizard, though he had only just completed his first year at Hogwarts.

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Even though Harry couldn't remember it, he had defeated one of the greatest evil wizards the world had ever seen, Lord Voldemort. Even years after his disappearance, most witches and wizards didn't mention him by name, for fear of calling his attention. However, the most remarkable part of it was that Harry was only one year old at the time. Voldemort had come to his parents cottage, trying to kill them all. Harry had survived, somehow, and had in fact destroyed Voldemort's power. Unfortunately, the evil wizard had been successful in getting rid of Harry's parents.

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Not that the Dursley's cared. They didn't care about an evil wizard who killed people. They didn't care about how Harry was famous for the act of defeating him. They didn't care that Harry had lost his parents in the attack. To them, Harry, and his world, were a problem, a horrible, disgusting weight. They hated everything about Harry that was special; they condemned it and didn't allow it in the house if possible. As did most of the people on Privet Drive. While they didn't know that Harry was a wizard, they knew there was something odd about him which they didn't approve of.

>
That was why Harry was not exactly excited to know that he would be going over to Helen Albertson's house today. Aunt Petunia admired her greatly and anyone Aunt Petunia admired had to be trouble. He had never met the lady himself, but he had been told that she was a respected member of the community, and to behave himself.

>
And so, dreading each step, Harry walked across the street and three houses down to Mrs. Albertson's old mansion. The house was majestic, but seemed a little run down. It had a castle-like feel to it, which would have bothered most folks, but made Harry feel more at home. And the house did look lived in. As if children had grown and loved the house; as if people would tend the garden themselves; as if one would pull a chair to the fireplace and tell stories to loved ones. It was, unlike the rest of Privet Drive, a very comfortable place, despite it's age and size. Courage renewed by the sight, Harry walked up to the door of 13 Privet Drive and knocked lightly.

> The door opened quickly, and a woman peeked her head out. Her face was pleasantly plump and framed with light brown hair, which was tipped with gray at the temples. Her eyes, which were a lighter shade of blue, were sharp, but motherly, and were accompanied by a small nose and a wide grin. She took one look at Harry, then grabbed his arm and pulled him in. Harry was more than a little surprised to see

that the woman, who he assumed was Mrs. Albertson, was wearing a blue robe, complete with what Harry figured was a wand in her pocket.

>"Oh, to think! Harry Potter in MY house!!" she exclaimed in a pleasant, if excited voice.

>"Huh?"

>"Oh, you must have figured it out by now, my boy!" she asked, smiling and patting his cheek.

>"You mean?"

>"Oh yes! Helen Albertson, upstanding citizen of Privet Drive, is a witch!"

>Harry didn't know how to respond to this, and as he tried to think up something to say, Mrs. Albertson pulled out the wand.

>"Well, I've got an even better surprise for you, my young hero!!" and with that, she whipped her wand around. As the magic ended, Harry found himself no longer in the reception hall, but in the dining room, which was covered in all sort of magical goodies.

Every-flavor-beans were filling several bowls to the brim, and chocolate frogs littered the table. At two place settings, Harry found a flask of butterbeer, and several cauldron cakes. Mrs.

Albertson grabbed his arm once more and pulled him to a seat next to her.

>"Wow! Mrs. Albertson! I never suspected tha- "

>Mrs. Albertson smiled. "Firstly, you are to call me Helen. Secondly, how useful would it be if anyone did suspect?"

>Harry nodded. "You've got a point." Harry's expression went from joy to confusion. "But I was told you were to discipline me!"

>"Well, how else was I going to get Petunia to let you over here? Certainly not by telling her I'm a witch?"

>"But, but, why?" Harry asked, "Why did you do all this for me?"

>Helen's expression went a bit more solemn. "It's the least I could do to show my gratitude. I mean, considering what you did for me, for all of us, and what it cost you..."

>"Do you mean..."

>"Yes, my boy. I mean HIM. He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named. He captured my family during that time, and used them to force me into telling him secrets from the Ministry of Magic. I work as the Secretary there. It was only when you defeated them that I got them back. My poor Arnold, he's a Muggle, so it took him as quiet a surprise. He knows about me, and it doesn't bother him, but those years spent as You-Know-Who's prisoner were very horrible for him. And the children! "

>"And they're all right now?"

>"Yes, thank goodness, they are. They resumed their lives, the children are 6th years at Hogwarts, much to my pride, and Arnold got his old job back. And we lived." Her face became stricken, "I'm so sorry, my boy, about your parents. They were good people. I worked with your ma for a few years, and a nicer woman I've never met. And your da..."

>"It's all right. I don't mind. I miss them, but..."

>"I know, dear, you move on..."

>The room was silent for a while, until Mrs. Albertson, er...Helen, exclaimed "Come on, I didn't bring you here to grieve!! I brought you here so that you'd have a little fun away from the Dursley's. Athena! Siren! Geoffrey! Come on out!"

>At her yell, three young people stepped into the room. Harry recognized them a bit, from seeing them in the halls, but didn't really know them well. More settings appeared, and the others sat

down. They talked about many things that day; Hogwarts, the Ministry, childhood, parents, friends, enemies, and happiness, all the while consuming ridiculous amounts of butterbeer and candy. When it was all over, Harry had made four new friends, and had gotten a much needed break from the Dursley's.

>As Harry was leaving, Helen stopped him at the door and handed him a little bundle.

>"Here, Harry, a few treats for you to take home. Hide it good, my boy, so that they don't see it. And keep you face straight. I was supposed to be yelling at you!"

>Harry smiled, then made his face completely straight. It was a well practiced skill that was almost necessary when living with the Dursley's.

>"I'll try to get you over her more often, but if you ever really need to get away, leave a note in my mailbox and I'll make sure you come over the next day, all right?"

>Harry nodded, then walked home. When he got there, his aunt and uncle were grinning. Their grins widened when they saw the look on Harry's face.

>"Taught you a thing or two, did she?"

>"Yes ma'am."

>"Beat you?"

>"Yes ma'am."

>"Good. Now get in your room!!!"

>Harry ran upstairs to his room, then burst into a quiet laugh. Laying down on his bed, he pulled out the bundle Helen had given him. She had packed him three bags of Every-flavor beans, two chocolate frogs, and 4 cauldron cakes. But what really surprised Harry was the little bundle and note inside with them. It contained two vials of red liquid, and the note attached to them read:

>"Dear Harry,
The liquid in these vials is called a Muteme potion. When taken, the person who took becomes entirely mute. Now, I know underaged wizards aren't allowed to do magic, but the magic is in the brewing, so you won't get into any trouble when you use these. They only last a day, and the victim, er... subject forgets everything the next day. Use them wisely and fairly, my boy. It's the least I can do for anyone who lives with Vernon and Petunia Dursley.

>Love, and Luck,
Helen "

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"Helen Albertson is the kindest individual on the planet!! Wait till I tell Ron and Hermione!!"

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